

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 IO-13 ARA-06 DHA-02
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R 011210Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4725
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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JOINT STATE/AID/USIA/PC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SEDU, SPOP, RW, CG, GW, FR, BE
SUBJECT: TRENDS IN RWANDA: MARCH 1977

REF: (A) KIGALI 309, (B) KIGALI 274, (C) BONN 5098 (NOTALS)

1. SUMMARY

GOR BECAME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT GROWING INSTABILITY IN CENTRAL AFRICA DURING MARCH. DISTURBANCES FIRST IN UGANDA AND THEN IN ZAIRE BOMBARDED POLICY-MAKERS WHO WERE ALREADY WORRIED ABOUT WHAT THEY REGARD AS EXPANDING SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA, BURUNDI, TANZANIA, AND UGANDA. IN THIS CONTEXT, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S TRIP TO FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND PLANNED VISITS TO FRANCE AND BELGIUM SUGGESTED GOR WISHED TO MOVE CLOSER TO WESTERN POWERS IN

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TIME OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY. AT HOME, GOV'T APPROVED SERIES OF REFORMS, MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH CENTERED ON NEW DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY AND NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM. END SUMMARY

2. SHABA INCURSION HEIGHTENS GOR JITTERS

FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF AMIN'S THREATS TO AMERICANS,

THE KATANGAN INVASION OF SHABA MADE GOR OFFICIALS MORE JITTERY THAN EVER ABOUT RWANDA'S POSITION AS A MODERATE CENTRAL AFRICAN STATE. DURING PAST TWO YEARS RWANDA HAS MOVED EVER CLOSER TO PXE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF GREAT LAKES (CEPGL), AND FEELS THAT DESTABILIZING EVENTS THERE, COUPLED WITH PERCEIVED SOVIET-SUPPORTED ARMS BUILDUPS IN BURUNDI AND UGANDA, LEAVE IT VULNERABLE TO OUTSIDE FORCES. DURING PAST MONTH, TWO GOR MISSIONS HAVE VISITED UGANDA, ONE TO URGE MODERATION IN DEALING AMCITS, AND RETURNING OFFICIALS HARDLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WHAT THEY'VE SEEN. GOR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING FONMIN, HAVE REPEATEDLY WARNED EMBOFFS THAT U.S. UNDERESTIMATES SOVIET AND CUBAN INTENTIONS, AND THAT U.S. AND WEST RISK "LOSING" AFRICA IF THEY DO NOT MEET SOVIET CHALLENGES AND STAND BY FRIENDS LIKE RWANDA. IN SUPPORT OF ZAIRE, PRES. HABYARIMANA SENT FONMIN TO KINSHASA MARCH 24 TO PRESENT MOBUTU WITH MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND TO SURVEY GENERAL SITUATION. MEANWHILE, GOR TOOK FURTHER STEPS TO REINFORCE LINKS WITH WESTERN NATIONS WHICH IT REGARDS AS FRIENDS.

3. HABYARIMANA LOOKS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN FRIENDS

A. DISCUSSES WORRIES WITH WEST GERMANS

FIRST STEP IN RWANDA'S LATEST MOVE TOWARD WEST WAS STATE VISIT TO FRG MARCH 14-17. HABYARIMANA TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM PRES. SCHEEL AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT OF HIS CONCERNS ABOUT CENTRAL AFRICA AND TO ENCOURAGE FRG TO TAKE DEVELOPING SITUATION MUCH MORE SERIOUSLY. SCHEEL REPORTEDLY WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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SYMPATHETIC BUT EXPLAINED THAT ELECTIONS IN WESTERN NATIONS HAD DELAYED ANY CONCERTED ACTION.

VISIT TO GERMANY WAS LOGICAL FIRST STOP, FOR AS ORIGINAL COLONIAL RULER OF RWANDA, FRG TRADITIONALLY HAS STRONG TIES WITH GOR. FRG IS GENEROUS AID DONOR TO RWANDA, ITS GRANT AID AVERAGING 3 - 4 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, MOSTLY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION. NEXT YEAR, FIGURE WILL INCREASE TO AN ESTIMATED 5 MILLION DOLLARS. IN PRESS CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT GAVE HEAVY EMPHASIS TO INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, PARTICULARLY FOR TOURISM-RELATED INDUSTRY, AND WARMLY CREDITED FRG FOR HELP IN ITS DEVELOPMENT. HE ALSO REITERATED RWANDAN WELCOME TO PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

HABYARIMANA SPEECH IN WEST BERLIN SUPPORTED REUNIFICATION BASED ON 1971 QUADRIPARTITE ACCORD. SOVIET AMBASSADOR LATER ADMITTED TO BELGIAN COLLEAGUE HERE THAT HE WAS SEVERLY REPRIMANDED FOR HAVING FAILED TO MAKE CLEAR TO PRESIDENT THAT WEST BERLIN NOT PART OF WEST GERMANY. EVEN

MORE UPSETTING MUST HAVE BEEN REFERENCE IN NAT'L PRESS
TO EAST BERLINERS LIVING UNDER "YOKE OF SOVIET UNION."

B. TO MAKE VISIT TO FRANCE

IN LINE WITH THIS TRIP, PRESIDENT WILL PAY OFFICIAL
VISIT TO FRANCE APRIL 13 - 15, PRIOR TO ATTENDING FRANCOPHONE
SUMMIT DAKAR. HE WILL PROBABLY ALSO SPEND SEVERAL DAYS IN
BELGIUM ON STRICTLY PRIVATE VISIT AS HE DID LAST SPRING. AS
RWANDA CURRENT PRESIDENT OCAM, DISCUSSIONS WITH FRENCH
CERTAIN TO TOUCH ON MULTILATERAL AS WELL AS BILATERAL AFFAIRS.
OCAM-RELATED PROBLEMS HAVE SOMEWHAT SOURED RWANDAN-FRENCH
RELATIONS IN PAST SIX MONTHS, BUT VISIT MAY PROVIDE NEEDED
SWEETNER.

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4. "NOT BY GOD ALONE . . ." GOR MOVES TOWARD NEW POPULATION
POLICY

THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TO RWANDANS
LAST WEEK THAT "PARENTS MUST UNDERSTAND IT IS NOT IMANA (GOD)
ALONE WHO GIVES CHILDREN. GOD LETS HIMSELF BE HELPED." WITH
THOSE WORDS, COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED A NEW, MORE

FORWARD-LOOKING POPULATION POLICY BASED ON PREMISE THAT RWANDA'S POPULATION GROWTH IS "GALLOPING." THE PRIMARY GOAL IS STILL TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION TO SUPPORT THE POPULATION, BUT GOR ENCOURAGES COUPLES TO REALIZE PROBLEM EXISTS. AS STATED IN NATIONAL PRESS, GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM HAVING BABIES BUT TO CONSIDER HOW MANY A COUPLE CAN REASONABLY SUPPORT. THUS, IT RECOMMENDS THAT UNTIL THERE IS A DEFINITIVE AND "RWANDAN" SOLUTION TO OVERALL PROBLEM, COUPLES FORCE THEMSELVES TO

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SPACE BIRTHS IN "THE MOST NATURAL MANNER."

APPROVAL OF POLICY MAY BE RESULT OF SERIES IMPORTANT MEETINGS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC COUNCIL DURING PAST SIX MONTHS. MARCH 15, COUNCIL DISCUSSED OVERALL DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY AS WELL AS PROJECT FOR INTEGRATION FAMILY PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN MEDICAL-HEALTH CENTERS, THE TOPIC OF ARTICLE BY SECGEN PUBLIC HEALTH IN RWANDAN MEDICAL REVIEW THIS MONTH. PROJECT NOT YET FINALLY APPROVED, BUT IT HAS RECEIVED GOV'T PRESS COVERAGE.

WE ARE WATCHING POPULATION DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY: AMBASSADOR ADDRESSED PRIVATE LETTER TO PRESIDENT SEVERAL WEEKS AGO OFFERING U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR POPULATION PROGRAMS. AND COINCIDENTALLY, ELIOT PUTNAM OF PATHFINDER FUND VISITED DURING MARCH AND WAS RECEIVED BY MINISTRY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS AND DOCTORS AT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE. PATHFINDER PLANS PROVIDE TRAVEL GRANTS FOR RWANDAN DEMOGRAPHERS.

5. AT LAST - EDUCATIONAL REFORM APPROVED

AFTER NEARLY FOUR YEARS OF DISCUSSION, THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED MARCH 29 A FAR-REACHING EDUCATIONAL REFORM PLAN WHICH WILL MAKE RWANDA ONE OF AFRICA'S FIRST STATES TO DO AWAY WITH TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN STRUCTURE IN FAVOR OF ONE RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY. AFTER LENGTHY CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PREFECTURAL CONGRESSES OF THE MRND, THE FOLLOWING BASIC REFORMS WERE ADOPTED:

- SCHOOL ENTRANCE AT AGE 7
- EIGHT YEARS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION: SIX OF GENERAL EDUCATION, TWO OF PRACTICAL WORK
- SELECTION AT END OF THE EIGHTH YEAR: APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT FOR UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY WORK AND ABOUT 90 PERCENT FOR THREE YEARS OF TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUITABLE TO THE AGRICULTURAL MILIEU

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- ORIENTATION OF PROGRAMS AT IPN AND NAT'L UNIVERSITY
TOWARD PRIORITY FIELDS OF STUDY.

TO IMPLEMENT REFORM, FOR WHICH NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN AN IDA/FRG PROJECT, KINYARWANDA
WILL BE USED AS LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL;
INCREASED ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CERAR (POST-PRIMARY
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STRUCTURES IN WHICH EMBASSY/AID
INTERESTED); AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS WILL BE PHASED OUT.

OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ARE PLEASED THAT
THIS REFORM HAS BEEN ACCEPTED EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MOST
EXPENSIVE ALTERNATIVE. IN 1975, FORMER MINEDUC THADDEE
BAGARAGAZA LOST HIS JOB BECAUSE HE WAS UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT
COMPLEMETE REFORM IN 1974-75 SCHOOL YEAR. PRESENT
MINISTER, PIERRZ-CLAVER MUTEMBEREZI, BIDED TIME BUT KEPT
THINGS MOVING (IDA/FRG SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT ALSO PROVIDED
IMPETUS). AS RECENTLY AS LAST MONTH, MINEDUC OFFICIALS
WERE STILL NOT SURE WHETHER PREFECTURAL CONGRESSES WOULD
SUPPORT REFORM PLAN. FITTINGLY, APPROVAL CAME AFTER PRESIDENT
HABYARIMANA'S TRIP TO FRG, WHICH SPARKED REFORM DEBATE
IN 1973 WITH DETAILED CRITIQUE OF EXISTING RWANDAN SYSTEM.
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